



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

is not satisfied with investigating properties, laws and powers, it insists on looking for benevolent design ; it considers its work unfinished, till it ascertains the purpose of kindness with which everything was created. Thus it is, that religion exerts a commanding influence over all the pursuits of enlightened minds ; they feel that it is only in the religious direction, that they can travel from glory to glory.

ART. VIII. — *Mrs. Sigourney and Miss Gould.*

1. *Poems.* By MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY. Philadelphia. 1834.
2. *Poems.* By MISS H. F. GOULD. Boston. 1835.

MANIFOLD are the perils, according to Madame de Stael, that beset the female writer who aspires to fame ; in a monarchy, she must expect to be assailed with the poisoned weapons of ridicule ; in a republic, with the formidable if less fatal enginery of universal hatred. But the remarks of this lady are not to be received as undisputed axioms ; they were apt to be suggested by her own feeling, rather than by observation of the world around her ; nor is there one of her many writings, in which she herself forgets, or suffers the reader to lose sight of her personal claims to sympathy. She said this in the bitterness of her heart, while, by the streams of Babylon, and amidst the serious privations that wait on exile, she remembered the place which she regarded as the wandering Hebrew did the Holy City, — the scene of her intellectual victories, the field in which alone she could encounter spirits as fiery and restless as her own. The experience of one, of a genius so erratic and peculiar, gives no just indication of the destiny awaiting others ; the burning track of the comet does not shew the unchanging orbit of a planet. Even her own fortunes were no fair illustration of the justice of her own remark. It was not her literary talent that exposed her to the ridicule or hatred, which she herself encountered ; it was not her philosophy or eloquence, that brought down upon her the ponderous vengeance of Napoleon ; she might have written till the twentieth century, without being driven out from the paradise of her affections ; it was rather the consuming passion for power and distinction, —

the fatal ambition of guiding the flashing wheels of the political revolutions of her own eventful day. It was when she concentrated the rays of her glorious intellect to consume the imperial throne,—when she spoke to the conqueror of the avenging judgment of the world and of posterity,—that he expressed his aversion to such recreations, and hastened to postpone the lecture to a more convenient season. Perhaps, when she told him that she should occupy a page in his history, it was not without a secret consciousness that she would ask for nothing better; the hurt of the daughter of ambition might be mitigated, if not entirely healed, by the balm of general applause and sympathy.

If the remark of Madame de Stael were well founded in its application to France, it would still have been destitute of justice as respects society elsewhere. There, the condition and influence of woman have long been quite peculiar; owing to an unusual social position, she has been conversant with subjects which are in other countries appropriated exclusively to man. From the time of Clovis to the Revolution, by an involuntary abrogation of the Salic law, the sceptre has often been consigned to female keeping by the weary, inefficient hands that held it. The personages thus selected as its guardians have sometimes bought this honor at the cost of better fame; but the influence attending their position has been such, as to render the movements of the political machine an object of general attention to the sex. Matters, on which the lips of English females would be sealed, have been canvassed; schemes designed with fear of change to perplex their own and all the nations, have been ordinary topics of speculation in the saloons of Paris. Such a character as that of Madame de Stael, at home in the whirlwind and the storm, burning to ride in the one and direct the other, could have been formed nowhere else. She was herself aware of this; and has given in her *Corinna* a picture of the English female character, as icy and repulsive as the summer of Prince Regent's Inlet; a picture, which is indebted to her fancy for many of its darkest hues, but which very strongly shews the horror with which she looks upon the fetters of English propriety and reserve. Madame Roland is another example of the influences we have mentioned; with less of brilliancy and ambition than her great contemporary, she was fired by a generous enthusiasm, combined with practical sense and talent, of which Madame de Stael, at any period of her

life, knew little : but it was the opportunity presented for the exhibition of these qualities by the peculiar tone and feeling of French society, which made her the guiding spirit of a party, of which Guadet and Vergniaud were champions, and enabled her to shew a spirit and magnanimity superior to theirs. We may imagine the dismay of the *coteries* of London, if they were to see some English Madame Roland discussing affairs of state at a cabinet dinner in Downing street ; if it were suddenly disclosed to them, that the despatches of the foreign secretaries were written by their wives, or that the Premier had poured into the ears of majesty the substance of a curtain lecture.

But there have been within a century some great changes of opinion, not limited in their operation to France and England, which have removed the real or imaginary dangers attending the exhibition of female talent. It would be idle to talk of these perils, in communities not destitute of female critics, and full of female readers. The literary empire, like almost every other, has been divided ; the sexes are beginning to share it pretty impartially ; nor would it be safe to say that woman's portion of it is less fertile or less wisely governed than the other. We should hold him to be rather indiscreet, to say the least, who should at this day make the experiment of casting reproach or ridicule on female writers, unless the circumstances of the case were pretty aggravated ; if things shall continue to go on as they have done for the last twenty years, it is by no means certain that these writers will not constitute a majority of the whole number, and, acting in the spirit of the republican principle, manage matters at their own discretion. Those who love to search out the literary characteristics of the time, and to read in the aspects of the heavens the movements of the intellectual constellations, will do well to watch the glittering train which are going up the sky, as the beautiful stars of the southern hemisphere lift themselves upon the view of the voyager beyond the equator. He will there perceive the evidences of a change, entirely without a parallel in the history of literature ; which has already raised the intellectual glory of woman to a point of elevation, not before attained or even conceived, and bids fair to produce still more important changes in the universe of mind. If it had been revealed to some philosopher of old, that the day should ever come, when the laurel wreaths of science, as well as the flower

garlands of romance and poetry, should entwine the brows of those whom he regarded as the painted insects of a summer day, no doubt he would have looked down with lofty scorn on the oracle and soothsayer ; nor would the poet of antiquity, we fear, have taken it in kindness, had he learned that woman, in the order of nature an inferior thing, in the order of society without rank or influence, should in coming years divide with him the jewels of his starry crown. But it were needless to go back to distant ages to ascertain the extent and nature of this revolution ; one, who merely turns to the beginning of the last century in Great Britain, will obtain a sufficiently just idea of the difference in the state of female literature in our own day and the past.

One might have expected that the reign of a female queen, fruitful as it was in literary talent, would give at least some indications of female power ; but the age of Anne took little of its character from her whose name it bears. She was as inefficient a personage, as the best regulated limited monarchy could possibly have asked for ; and her reign brought no distinction to her sex ; with the exception of one or two, who gained a transient notoriety by their talent for political intrigue and mischief, there is no female who has given the historian the trouble to record her name. It was at the beginning of the reign of George I., that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu burst upon the world in the full splendor of her wit and beauty. She was undoubtedly an extraordinary person ; it is curious to see the extent of the homage paid to her intellectual as well as personal attractions. It was no common mind, on which Pope exhausted his power of flattery in verse, and his hyperbole in prose ; he prostrates himself before her like an Indian idolater before the sun ; the depth and fervency of his devotion are quite too great to be entirely sincere, but they certainly shew in what general esteem the object of so much eulogy was held. At the period of their subsequent estrangement, he seemed afraid to avow himself her enemy ; Johnson declares that he meanly retreated before her, and disavowed the application of satires, the aim of which was plain enough to others ; and well he might ; she had the power and the will to repay such favors with ample liberality ; and the "little nightingale,—all sound and no sense," as she bitterly called him, however he may stand in the eyes of posterity, fared no better in those of his own generation for his quarrel with

“that dangerous thing, a female wit.” She was, moreover, the object of the praise of Young, and of the sarcasm of that prince of literary exquisites, Horace Walpole. Her reputation as a writer is principally founded on her letters; they are certainly models of ease and grace, of keen observation and polished wit; but they elevate our respect for her understanding more than they exalt our estimation of her delicacy, and leave upon the reader no strong impression of any lofty traits of character. It is but fair to say that the letters were not published by herself, nor even in her lifetime. The pupil of Burnet, the lady who translated the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus at twenty, might, had the moral purpose not been wanting, have been remembered as the glory of her age; as it is, her memory is scarcely preserved, and is scarcely worth preserving.

Lady Mary long survived her beauty, and lived in comparative retirement abroad for many years before her death. The only female writers of distinction, contemporaneous with her at the latter period of her life, were Elizabeth Carter and Elizabeth Montague; the one a bright example of learning and unpretending piety, the other more remarkable for her influence in society than for her writings. Neither requires much notice as an instance of female literary success. Southey, in his specimens of English poetry, has endeavored to redeem some female poets of this generation from the tomb; but it is impossible to imagine a more melancholy charnel-house, than the edifice he has erected to their memory. Scott has also engaged in the same amiable task in the lives of the novelists; but there is really little in the works of those whose biographies he has recorded, to give them an abiding place in the public favor. Nor would one obtain an exalted idea of the influence or estimation of woman, from the novels of the last century, regarded as delineations of society; such writers as Fielding and Smollet, to be sure, could hardly be expected to discover any examples of either, in the haunts they most frequented; but in Richardson, we might expect, if any where, to meet them. His ladies, however, are distinguished principally by their passive qualities, and attract us rather as objects of compassion, than from any power which they display over the minds of others. This is natural enough in general; but in the many and massive works of such a painter, who was ambitious to copy nature, some portrait of woman in her most commanding

form would probably have been found, had his observation furnished him with the original of such a picture.

The change, however long delayed, came at last, and the first decided sign of it appeared in the works of Fanny Burney. About sixty years ago, she began to give to the world her animated pictures of society, full of contrasts as deep and striking, as that of the light and shadow of a portrait painted by torch-light. They were doubtless exaggerated, and were indebted to this depth of coloring for much of their effect ; but they were also pervaded by a spirit and freshness, which seem like the result of inspiration, when compared with the pedantry and dullness of her later writings. Her first work was *Evelina*, and there are some curious anecdotes on record concerning its reception. "You *must* have it, Madam," thundered Johnson to a female friend ; Edmund Burke sat up all night to read it ; Sir Joshua Reynolds refused to quit it for his dinner, and, after the fashion of Mr. Oldbuck, read and ate at the same time. "With flying colors," as the author herself remarks in her late strange memoirs of her father, "the work went off." "No imagination," said Burke, "not even the imagination of Miss Burney,—could have invented so extraordinary a character as that of Cardinal Ximenes : no pen,—not even the pen of Miss Burney,—could have described it adequately." Dr. Johnson, after exhausting his eloquence in praise of the work in a large company, proceeded from words to deeds, and set about personating Mr. Smith, one of the vulgar characters of the work, himself. "We thought," says Mrs. Thrale, "that we should have died no other death than that of suffocation, on seeing Dr. Johnson handing about any thing he could catch or snatch at, and making smirking bows, saying he was 'all for the ladies,—every thing that was agreeable to the ladies, except going to church with them.'" Certainly it was no ordinary work, that made such innovation in the brains of these grave personages. Cecilia came next, having been read and admired in manuscript by Mr. Burke before its publication. It was of this work that Lord Thurlow, when conducted into the library of a nobleman whom he was visiting, remarked, "What signify all your fine and flourishing books ! Here is a little work (taking Cecilia from his pocket) that's worth them all !" We mention these circumstances, because, from the character of this lady's later productions, one can scarcely form the least conception of that of her earlier ones, and because they serve

very strikingly to shew with what cordiality of welcome the earliest were received. Their defects of style, and extravagance of coloring, strike one more forcibly on a second reading than the first; but they are certainly works of remarkable talent, considering the youth and position of the writer.

Nearly at the same time was presented the strange apparition of a country girl, with no advantages of birth, and no unusual ones of education, the charm of whose conversation places her at once amidst the highest circles of the intellect and fashion of the capital; before whom Johnson composes himself into unusual and reluctant courtesy, and Walpole bows down with instinctive homage; who writes poetry, not of the very first order, but which the first minds of the day are contented to admire, and dramas, which win the rapturous applause of the pit and boxes; who speaks to the sense and feelings of the multitude, when the clouds of revolution are gathering in their wrath, in tones the remembrance of which has long survived the excitement that gave them birth; who next addresses her impressive lessons of morality, with equal power and effect, to the fashionable and the great; and having done this, retires from the sphere she was thus fitted to adorn, in order to instruct the children of the poor; to nourish in solitude the flame of her religious feeling, and make it burn with kind and gentle influence on others, through the closing years of a useful and protracted life. The wise and good of many nations pronounce with grateful reverence the name of Hannah More. It is difficult, at this day, to measure accurately the extent of her influence, great and well-defined as it undoubtedly was, because most of her writings were occasioned by temporary circumstances, and lost, of course, a portion of their interest with the changes of the times. But there is enough to shew, that she possessed the surest evidence of genius, the power to set its seal on other minds; whether she wrote anonymously or under her own name, her writings were welcomed with equal earnestness, and produced equal effect; and if we measure the degree of merit by its influences, it would be hard to point to any superior writer of her age, in the field which she selected; a field, which can hardly be said to be a popular one, and in which talent of no inferior order is required to command success. It was a more certain evidence of ability no less than virtue, that she gave her whole mind and heart to the highest and holiest cause, at a time when the world solicited her with

seductions, which too often tempt our nature beyond its strength. How striking and how delightful is it, to see one to whom the literary princes of the earth did homage, retiring voluntarily from their brilliant circle to labor in a village school, in her quiet retreat at Cheddar; cheerfully encountering the evil report of minds too narrow to comprehend her own; and never pausing in her toil for the welfare of her race, even when pressed by the infirmity that is apt to make the kindest selfish, till her heart was cold in death! The present age will do well to cherish the fame of such a woman; it can find no surer way to exalt its own.

We come next to a name, on which the young and old, of this country as well as of her own, alike delight to dwell;—the name of Maria Edgeworth; who, by a fortunate exemption from the ordinary laws of exhaustion and decline, has lately reappeared before the public as a writer, with scarcely less vigor and success, than when thirty years ago she stood without a rival. It was about the beginning of the present century, that she began to pour forth, in beautiful succession, her diversified and striking tales of character and life, with invention as untiring as the eagle's wing, and a generous purity of purpose, that flowed from an unfailing fountain. The earliest of her writings was published several years before. It was well that she should appear, while the star of Hannah More was in the ascendant; they shew, by their remarkable and impressive example, that the modes of doing good are as various as the shades of character and talent; though moving at almost the same point of elevation, in the same sphere, neither ever crossed the other's track, or eclipsed the other's light. The inspiration of the one was borrowed from fountains, that flow fast by the oracles of God; her lips were touched with fire from high and holy altars; and this consciousness of an exalted mission gave a corresponding dignity to her efforts, while the natural intensity of purpose which it produced, led her to convey her lessons in the form in which they could most directly reach the heart. The other went forth into the abodes of men, to draw them by gentle persuasion in the way of virtue; not so much by shewing them its innate loveliness, as by convincing them how closely it was connected with their happiness and comfort, the only kind of conviction to which a large portion of mankind will condescend to listen; and in doing this, she spread the sunlight of her generous feeling on all around her, making it shine as brightly in the lowly and familiar places,

as on the cliffs and mountains ; until many, who could not be induced to follow virtue for virtue's sake, were content to do it for their own. We wish she had added to her other titles to admiration, that which is derived from the wisdom from above ; but we cannot forget, that while the name of Christianity never escapes her lips, she assiduously labors to promote one of its noble ends, and thus prepares a way, by which religion may gain an entrance into hearts, that never before gave it welcome. Each of these distinguished writers was employed in her own way in the lofty task of making others better ; and they remind us of two instruments of music, the one responding to the winds of heaven, the other struck with the perfection of human skill, mingling together their delightful harmony. Both had in a high degree the power of reformers ; the direct and animated eloquence of one aroused the attention of those, on whose ear the warnings of religion had fallen listlessly and dead ; the other made her representations of morality alluring to the eye, which had long been averted from the frigid portraiture of the writers that went before her.

The range of Miss Edgeworth, great as it is, has very definite limits. She has a conscientiousness about her, which impairs her spirit, when she steps beyond the sphere of her own observation ; within it, she sees and describes with wonderful accuracy and truth, standing at the precise point of view at which every object is represented in the proper light, and in its just relative proportions. Her talent is obviously not adapted to the historical romance, because she does not possess the instinctive faculty of divining how those whom she has never seen, will think, and talk, and act, by studying the thoughts, conversation and actions of the persons with whom she is familiar. Some of the personages whom she has introduced into her novels, accordingly, are cold and formal ; like the bailiffs, introduced as gentlemen into Goldsmith's *Goodnatured Man*, who look their parts exceedingly well, but occasionally let slip an astounding imprecation upon all Frenchmen and wooden shoes. On the other hand, her descriptions of Irish life and character are so spirited and vivid, that we never ask whether they are accurate ; we at once feel and know that they are true. In all that appertains to social and ordinary life, she goes below the stillness of the surface, and watches with unerring certainty the force and direction of the under currents, the efficient principles of action. The reader, therefore, surrenders himself at

discretion, because he finds every thing true to nature, true to character, true to life, and is never harassed with those doubts, which sometimes destroy the moral effect of striking delineations. Then her magical invention illuminates the whole, with a radiance like that which our own landscape sometimes presents, when the leafless forest is encrusted with ice, and blazes like a fairy palace in the winter's sun. How happily must the brilliant drapery of fiction be wrapped around the severe beauty of moral instruction, when their blended attractions are made to sink deep in every heart, and find a permanent dwelling-place in all memories! When does mild philosophy appear more charming, than when she gracefully stoops to impress her precepts on the ear of infancy?

Had the present generation produced no other female writers than the two whose merits we have mentioned, it would still have furnished enough to shew, that the intellect of woman may possess commanding influence; but the names of other illustrations of the remarks which we have made throng upon the recollection, and it would require a larger space than we can now command to do them anything like justice. Even in advanced age, we see Miss Baillie still tracing the fiery streams of passion to their sources, — searching into the hidden things of that dark mystery, the heart, — and arraying her startling revelations in the imposing garb of rich and classical poetry. Mrs. Somerville, going still farther beyond the province of inquiry, which custom has allotted to her sex, has invaded the domain of physical science with a power and comprehension, of which few examples are afforded by the living philosophers of her native isle. Miss Martineau has also redeemed that sex from the class of unproductive laborers, by bringing the principles of political economy from the lecture-room and study to the fireside, until the public is ready to share the enthusiasm of the sailor, who exclaimed in reply to one applauding the beauty of the representations in Captain Parry's arctic theatre, "Beautiful! I say 'tis philosophy!" We ought not to forget the graphic pencil of Miss Mitford, who seems to have imbibed a portion of the spirit of Miss Edgeworth, with independent excellencies of her own; nor can we easily forget another, who has associated herself not ingloriously with the best modern poets of her country, and who has just descended to an immature and honored grave, at the moment when she might have been expected to do much more to render permanent a

reputation, which rose with every year of her life. The excellencies of Mrs. Hemans were her own ; she imitated no one but herself ; and she possessed the faculty of investing even barren subjects with so much beauty of sentiment and language, that the associations she awakens are forever bound with them in the recollection of her readers. We are not awed by her power, but attracted rather by her tranquil grace, and still more by the purity, that runs through all her writings ; a quality, which certain commanding poets of our time have held in somewhat light esteem. She aimed at nothing bold and startling, but she accomplished every thing at which she aimed. Those who love to see the waters of poetry overhung by the dark masses of the cloud, or lashed by the tempest into wrath, or heaving and menacing at the very moment of their deepest repose, will find in her writings little to admire ; her course is that of a gentle stream, stealing through meadows carpeted with flowers, and cheerful, even when it flows beneath the depths of shade.

While the literature of Great Britain has been thus adorned by female intellect, our own has not been slow to partake of the regeneration ; there is no doubt that the amount of woman's literary effort, in proportion to the whole, is greater here, and has done more to elevate the national character and her own, than in any other country ; and it should be remembered that those who have labored longest have not yet reached the meridian of their powers, and that what they have already done is not to be taken as the full measure of what they have it in their power to do. When we speak of the female writers of our country, the heart, in the strong language of Johnson, " goes out to meet " Miss Sedgwick ; if no other had yet appeared among us, no other nation would have cause to boast its own superiority. To speak at large of her writings, would be about as superfluous as to gild refined gold, or paint the lily ; they are familiar already to every lover of truth and nature. Deep pathos, perpetual sympathy with all that is generous in feeling, and a keen insight into all that is lofty or noble in character, pervade them all, and inspire no less respect for her moral qualities, than admiration of her talent. To an inventive power and quickness in seizing the delicate shades of society, as well as in presenting them with perfect distinctness, inferior to that of Miss Edgeworth, she unites a faculty of description, and of giving reality and life to the character of

other times, which Miss Edgeworth does not possess, at least in the same degree of perfection ; and in one of the most recent of her publications, to which we shall presently advert more fully, she has exhibited a power of conveying moral truth through the attractive medium of fictitious story, not surpassed by that of any other writer of the time. While she has wielded the sceptre of romance with so much grace and skill, she has been followed with no very unequal steps by other ladies, who share her talent and her name. The range of Mrs. Child is somewhat more diversified ; her first beautiful romance yields to no other, which is founded on our own past history ; she has shewn herself no less at home in the graver department of biography ; and her fine powers have been applied, with equal skill and success, to the task of rendering instruction attractive to the young ; while, in the mean time, one of her publications gives portentous evidence that she has not sacrificed to literature the sub-lunary concerns of domestic economy. We owe to the graphic pen of Miss Leslie some of the most curiously wrought delineations of character and manners ; no Flemish paintings could be more truly colored or accurately drawn. Mrs. Hale has cultivated with success the sister branches of romance and poetry ; and, in another department, the name of Mrs. Farrar holds a distinguished place. It is, however, needless to pursue the enumeration of names, familiar to all readers. A very large amount of talent has been displayed in fugitive efforts, that deserve a record in more enduring forms.

This is a very cursory view of the evidences of the change, of which we have been speaking. So great a change could not come over the form and fashion of literature, without producing some important changes in its spirit ; and in one respect, the alteration is already visible. By a beautiful illustration of justice, it appears to be reserved for woman to do for Christianity in some degree what Christianity did for her, when it raised her to her just position in the social scale, and enabled her to become a bright example of its own beatitude. Such have, accordingly, been the aim and tendency of female literature in general ; we may confidently believe that it will continue to be found on religion's side ; and if such should be the fact, it would be treachery to the great purpose of our being not to welcome it, as a momentous and restoring power. Whoever believes that the ultimate end of science is to instruct, and that of poetry to please, mistakes the matter great-

ly ; the true and only worthy object of all literary effort, and all scientific research is, to purify the heart while they enlarge the mind, and thus to render both, according to their humble measure, worthy of the Source to which they owe their powers. Great minds have prostituted their high endowments to base and sordid purposes ; philosophers have labored with insane delight to degrade and vilify their nature ; historians have gone deep into the lore of ages to shew the sad condition of their race, and its still more wretched destiny ; the great masters of the lyre have invested sensuality with the robe and diadem of virtue ; but it is wisely ordained by Providence, that they shall forfeit permanent and enviable fame, while they thus abuse their trust. The only glory to be won by such unholy means is poor and perishable ; it cannot strike its roots deep, and spread forth its giant arms, so as to resist the waste and storms of centuries. The writer, who expects the future generations to rise up and call him blessed, who would add his name to those of the great benefactors of mankind, whose memory shall not fail, must inscribe it on the rock of ages. These are truths, which woman is in far less danger of forgetting than man, from whose memory the pride of intellect or the hope of applause, so frequently obliterates them.

If such is to be the religious character of female writers, their moral influence will of course be great and happy ; this result is equally assured by their social position, and their prevailing qualities of mind and heart. The spirit of man is militant, and whatever be the cause he is engaged in, strikes for victory ; passion sweeps over his purest purposes, and leaves the heart a desert ; interest, the god of this world, takes possession of the abandoned dwelling-place ; rivalry and envy blight, like a summer frost, his generous emotions ; and vanity, the gilded serpent, whispers her temptations not vainly in his ear. It was remarked by Edmund Burke, that nothing in this world is so hard as the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician ; but the same petrifying effect is visible in every pursuit, by which fame and honor are to be won ; because the whole mind, and soul, and strength are thus concentrated on a single object, — an object frequently without relation to the welfare of others. The spirit of philanthropy sometimes takes possession of the bosom. Then the dreams of ambition vanish, the iron grasp of avarice is relaxed. Then the missionary of humanity traverses the arctic snows, and the burning waste ; flies to the

sickly vapors of the prison, and buries himself in the anticipated grave of the hospital ; shrinks from no privation, smiles at all danger, wherever there is evil to be averted, or good to be done ; and if the cause demand the sacrifice, the victim is ready for the altar or the stake. Surely there is nothing in the world more commanding, than this fierce energy of the human mind ; — nothing nobler, when it takes the form of dazzling and enthusiastic virtue ; nothing more absorbing or intense than this stern devotion of the soul, even to a selfish object. But it is not from lips that are sounding forth the war-cry of passion, whether good or evil, that the gentle accents of persuasion are to come ; it is not thus that one mind becomes qualified to commune with another with mild and salutary influence ; least of all, to speak to the young heart in tones that shall win it to the love of virtue. The mind, thus absorbed, stands separate from others by its solitude or elevation. But the gentle voice of woman addresses that heart, when its earliest thoughts may be easily inclined to good, in the soothing accents of interest and tenderness, in the fireside lesson, in the music of the infant hymn ; before it has gone forth to wrestle with temptation, but not before the education for eternity is begun. It speaks to the maturer mind in those accents of truth and reason, which are heard amidst the conflict of contending passions ; and which, however unheeded, are repeated from the opening of life till its last sun goes down. By a peculiar happiness of position, she is in a great degree removed from the influence of those infirmities of the mind, which the world are now disposed to regard as the evidences of its power ; as if the delirium of fever were an indication of the usual temperament, or the fierce effort of convulsion the measure of our ordinary strength. She cannot comprehend, how the intelligent and haughty can be brought to wear the iron fetters of political party with no less triumph, than if they were badges of sovereignty, instead of slavery ; she is slow to understand, how the Christian can obey to the letter all the commandments, except the one expressly given by the Author of his faith ; she is reluctant to believe the humiliating truth, that the applause of mankind is to be won by employing the gifts of God in hostility to Him who gave them. We may surely venture to indulge the hope, that her influence will mitigate the wild excitement of the chase for wealth and fame, tranquillize the angry passions which constantly rebel against the necessary ills of our condition, and

convince men that the way of wisdom is the way of pleasantness and peace.

We know not a more beautiful example of the facility and grace, with which the power of woman's intellect may be thus exerted, than is presented in Miss Sedgwick's little tale, entitled "Home." For ourselves, we should hold the applause which she had won before in light esteem, compared with the consciousness, which the effect of this touching story must have given her, of her power to do good. With a single exception, in which a practical lesson is inculcated at variance with the opinions of large portions of the community, we know no production, in which the soundest moral lessons are more attractively conveyed. Its scenes and pictures are generally of a kind, which no writer of the other sex could have exhibited with half so strong and affecting an impression; — they are family pictures, — fireside scenes, — and their images rise up before us, with all those associations, the first to enter and the last to leave the heart, which entwine and cling around the venerable name of home. If anything could render us contented with our fortunes, and anxious to promote the happiness of others, it must be works like this. They will win for their accomplished author a more enduring title to the public gratitude, than any that romance or poetry can give; and if her whole attention should henceforward be exclusively applied to them, she would only enhance her pure and exalted fame.

With such examples before us of what female talent can accomplish, as those to which we have alluded, we cannot well point to any literary department, in which it is likely henceforth to be exclusively displayed; for even while we are engaged in speculating in regard to its capacities, they may be developed in novel forms and to a hitherto unknown extent. A few years ago, no one would have indicated scientific research, as likely to become the field for their exertion. It may probably, however, be safely assumed, that those branches which belong to the province of imagination, are the to which woman will be most inclined by her prevailing taste and qualities; and in these she is eminently fitted to excel. Among these branches, the fashion of the day has attached unusual interest to romantic fiction; and there is no doubt that this, under the guidance of true observation and sound principle, may be an active handmaid of virtue. Those who are most

inclined to doubt its value, object to it on the ground of what all admit to be its abuse and imperfection ; nobody denies that false representations of life and character are of pernicious tendency, but it is far from following, that just ones are injurious also. On the contrary, they stand to us in the stead of experience, by connecting causes with their consequences, and presenting moral results, often more directly than we can trace them in real life ; nor is it an evil that this is done in an attractive way ; if ornament be necessary to captivate and gratify, we know not why morality should scorn to wear it. Some of the most instructive lessons, and those which come the nearest to the heart, are to be drawn from social life ; but they lose at once their value, when they are without fidelity to nature ; and this sort of truth is one of those graces, which romance has been much too slow to acquire, and too ready to part with. One may as well study human nature in Gulliver or Peter Wilkins, as in the greater portion of our novels. We may anticipate with confidence, that much female talent will take this direction, and that, combined with the keen observation and power of description with which it is rarely unaccompanied, it will raise the standard of excellence in this branch of literature, while it accomplishes real and extensive good. There is one thing which woman may certainly effect in it ; she may do her own sex justice ; a point on which the novelists of the other sex have not been very scrupulous ; and when a striking example of female character is wanted, she may create a Belinda or Lady Geraldine, instead of a Meg Merrilies or Norna. In poetry, too, she may find a fit province for her genius. There she may gather flowers that never will in other climates grow. Her eye may not look with piercing brightness through the lower clouds, and gaze undazzled on the seraphim around the throne ; she may not send forth strains of more than mortal depth and fullness, like the few, who have been invested with angelic attributes below ; but her voice will be heard in those aspirations for higher things, — in those breathings of a lovely and confiding spirit, — which shew what poetry is, when it fulfils its worthy office of withdrawing the mind from the earthly and material, to fix it on that which is spiritual and undying. In short, she may display her happy and improving influence in all those branches of literature, which are most nearly connected with the welfare of mankind, and tend to exalt and dignify our nature ; and thus

redeem them from the discredit in which they are apt to be involved, by the unworthiness of those who abuse, while they pretend to cultivate them.

The two ladies, whose writings we propose to notice, present of themselves an assurance, that our expectations are not wholly groundless. About twenty years ago, at the very outset of our critical labors, the earliest publication of Mrs. Sigourney, then Miss Huntley, was reviewed in this journal. It was considered as evincing much real merit and still greater promise, and derived an additional claim to attention from the circumstances under which it was prepared; circumstances reflecting so much credit on the author, that a slight allusion to them here will not be thought indelicate. She was indebted for her education to her own exertions; in early life she had none of the advantages, which affluence and leisure can bestow; yet, under the pressure of various inconveniences, she cultivated with success the art to which she owes her fame. It remained to be seen, whether, under other and more favorable circumstances, she would retain the same inclination, and go on improving in the way to which her youthful tastes inclined her. This was by no means certain; many are the ladylike accomplishments, which, like the burden of the pilgrim, are thrown aside with infinite satisfaction, at certain eventful stages in life's journey; but the reputation she has since acquired has been so general, that we need hardly say how our hopes have been fulfilled. Without devoting her attention exclusively to poetry, or engaging in the composition of any extensive work, Mrs. Sigourney has continued from time to time to give to the public, principally through the medium of the magazines and annuals, a variety of productions, by which she has acquired a high rank as a popular and useful writer.

The volume before us is a collection of the poetical productions, which the author has thought proper to publish in a more permanent form. Some of its contents were written at a very early age; others, as she herself assures us, were composed at later periods, amidst domestic occupations or maternal cares; and the greater portion of them were suggested by passing circumstances, and may be regarded as extemporary in their nature. She describes them "as the wild flowers which have sprung up in the dells, or among the clefts of the rock;" but we feel ourselves entitled to assure her, that they will neither bloom like the wild flowers in solitude, nor fade as

soon ; they will be more likely to be numbered among the lasting favorites of the garden. Such writings do not ask nor admit of the display of some of the very highest attributes of poetry, and to these Mrs. Sigourney presents no claim. The excellence of all her poems is quiet and unassuming. They are full of the sweet images and bright associations of domestic life ; its unobtrusive happiness, its unchanging affections, and its cares and sorrows ; of the feelings naturally inspired by life's vicissitudes from the cradle to the death-bed ; of the hopes that burn, like the unquenched altar fire, in that chosen dwelling place of virtue and religion. The light of a pure and unostentatious faith shines around them, blending with her thoughts and giving a tender coloring to her contemplations, like the melancholy beauty of our own autumnal scenery. Sometimes she watches the gorgeous array of the clouds at sunset, but her eye looks beyond them to the habitation of the disembodied spirit ; sometimes she muses at the eventide, and the forms of the loved and lost are present to her view ; presently she carries us to the domestic fireside, and while dwelling on its blessings, points to the great Source from which they flow ; again, we see the mother at the bedside of her dying boy, or herself extended on the bed of death, — and the lofty aspirations of the Christian faith invest the verse with a dignity appropriate to their own sublimity. Mrs. Sigourney's habitual tone of thought is pensive, but not melancholy ; serious, but not severe ; and her views of life, without being joyous, are not shaded by repulsive gloom. Every subject she touches is made the fountain of calm reflection, which is often striking, and always pure. If she do not often excite the reader to enthusiastic admiration, she generally leaves a strong impression of her power, and never fails to inspire respect for the qualities of her mind and heart.

Mrs. Sigourney's versification is, in general, correct and sweet ; although, in this respect there are occasional instances of want of care. The effect of short pieces, like the greater part of her's, very much depends upon the delicacy and perfection of their finish ; in those of greater magnitude, the attention is withdrawn from minute defects, or they are lost in a comprehensive survey of the general proportions ; as an imperfection, which, would pass unheeded in a panorama, is at once detected in a cabinet picture. Her writings in blank verse are, however, remarkable for the music of their flow. In their

style of thought and expression, they remind us of those passages of Cowper, where the movement of the verse is in perfect keeping with the gravity and tenderness of the subject. Like him, she is attracted only by Nature's soothing and gentle aspects; her spirit holds no communion with the elements in their wrath; she takes no delight in witnessing the whirlwind and the storm; she looks on all the seasons, as they change, not to people them with images of gloom, but to draw from them whatever of happiness and instruction they can give. A voice of praise is uttered in her Winter Hymn; the beautiful drapery of the woods in autumn reminds her less of approaching decay, than of the newness of life which is to follow. We could not desire that the moral influence of her writings should be other than it is; while she pleases the fancy, she elevates the heart.

Great as Mrs. Sigourney's merit certainly is, she has not yet displayed it with so much effect as she may and will do, if she shall be inclined to render poetry a more exclusive object of pursuit. Thus far, it has evidently been little more than the amusement of her leisure hours; with less divided attention, she has the power of accomplishing higher and better things. The productions before us are ornaments, wrought without much effort by taste and ingenuity; they resemble the lighter works, with which the scientific inventor occupies the time that he can spare from his severer labors. Whenever, instead of limiting her range to that portion of the atmosphere which can be traversed with a light and careless wing, she shall prepare herself for an adventurous flight, she cannot fail to gain a permanent place in the public favor.

As an illustration of her sensibility to natural beauty, and of the grace with which she describes it, we extract "A Cottage Scene."

"I saw a cradle at a cottage door,
Where the fair mother with her cheerful wheel
Carolled so sweet a song, that the young bird,
Which timid near the threshold sought for seeds,
Paused on his lifted foot, and raised his head,
As if to listen. The rejoicing bees
Nestled in throngs amid the woodbine cups,
That o'er the lattice clustered. A clear stream
Came leaping from its sylvan height, and poured
Music upon the pebbles, — and the winds,

Which gently 'mid the vernal branches played
Their idle freaks, brought showering blossoms down,
Surfeiting earth with sweetness.

Sad I came
From weary commerce with the heartless world,
But when I felt upon my withered cheek
My mother nature's breath, — and heard the trump
Of those gay insects, at their honied toil
Shining like winged jewelry, — and drank
The healthful odor of the flowering trees
And bright-eyed violets ; — but most of all,
When I beheld mild slumbering Innocence,
And on that young maternal brow the smile
Of those affections which do purify
And renovate the soul, I turned me back
In gladness, and with added strength to run
My weary race ; — lifting a thankful prayer
To *Him* who shewed me some bright tints of Heaven
Here on the earth, that I might safer walk
And firmer combat sin, and surer rise
From earth to Heaven."

The following lines, written "on seeing the deaf, dumb and blind girl sitting for her portrait," afford a just idea of the natural and pleasing sentiment, with which the author knows how to invest her subjects. There is apparently an imperfection in the second line of the first stanza.

"Heaven guide thee, artist ! Though thy skill
Can make the enthusiast's passion tear,
And catch expression's faintest thrill,
What power shall prompt thy pencil here ?

She hath no eye, — God quenched its beam ;
No ear, — though thunder's trump be blown,
No speech, — her spirit's voiceless stream
Flows dark, unfathomed and unknown.

Yet hath she joys, though none may know
Their germ, their impulse, or their power ;
And oft her kindling features glow
In meditation's lonely hour,

Or when unfolding blossoms breathe
Their fragrance 'neath a vernal sky,
Or feeling weaves its wild-flower wreath
As some remembered friend draws nigh,

Then doth the heart its love reveal,
Though lip and eye are sealed the while,
And then do wildering graces steal
To paint their language on her smile.

For still the undying soul may teach
Without a glance, a tone, a sigh,
And well canst thou its mirrored speech
Interpret to the wondering eye.

What though her locked and guarded mind
Doth foil philosophy divine,
Till even reason fails to find
A clue to that untravelled shrine,

Yet may thine art with victor sway
Win laurels from this desert wild,
And to a future age portray
Mysterious nature's hermit child."

Several of the remarks, which we have made in reference to Mrs. Sigourney, will apply with equal justice to Miss Gould. This lady has been for some years very favorably known, chiefly by the fugitive pieces which she has contributed to many of our most popular periodical works. Within a year or two, she has collected these and published them in a separate volume, which has already received a very strong expression of the general sentiment in its favor, by the demand for a third edition, a compliment very rarely paid in our generation to any of the sons or daughters of song. One of the principal attractions of her writings is their perfect freedom from pretension; she composes without the slightest effort to do more than to express her own thoughts in the most unaffected language; in this way, however, she produces more effect, than she could do by laborious effort. The sin of affectation is the one, which most easily besets the poet, for the reason that it wears the air of novelty; whoever undertakes to describe feelings which we have never experienced, and to express sentiments which have rarely figured in verse before, or even to clothe familiar ideas and feelings in a masquerade dress, will be pretty sure to attract admiration, until the public have had time to detect his borrowed plumage, when he is likely enough to be dealt with according to the most rigorous canon of the law. In this respect, Miss Gould never offends; she is uniformly faithful to

nature. Like Mrs. Sigourney, she gathers the wild flowers of the rock and dell ; and she does more ; she collects those which many pass by unnoticed, as too common and familiar to be entitled to a place in an ornamental garland ; but she looks upon them as the works of God, and fitted to convey a striking and impressive moral. We confess that we like this disposition to see and welcome beauty wherever it is to be found, without regard to the rarity or estimation of the object in which it dwells. It is, doubtless, the secret of her popularity ; she sees in the retiring ground-laurel, the no less timid anemone, the crocus in its snowy winding-sheet, the hyacinth bursting from its temporary grave, the emblems of our own vicissitudes. Nothing in nature is without its moral lesson ; she finds instruction in the solitary snowflake, the little bower of violets, the forsaken nest of the bird, and even in the breast-pin, the lost kite, and the playthings of infancy. But tones of deeper feeling come forth from the winter funeral, the prayer of the broken-hearted, the empty bier by the church-yard gate, the soul's farewell to its earthly prison. These are some of the diversified subjects on which she loves to dwell ; she invests them with sentiment and imagery, sometimes familiar, sometimes new, but always in harmony with true and amiable feeling, and awakening associations to which no bosom is a stranger. This power of investing the objects around us with moral associations may be too freely exercised, and there are some instances in the volume before us, in which the familiar sinks into the homely, and the rock is struck in the unreasonable hope, that the living waters of poetry will flow ; but such instances are very rare, and scarcely cast a shade over the good taste and excellent feeling, which characterize her writings.

Several imitations of the Scottish are given at the close of the volume. They are not, as respects the truth and beauty of the sentiment, inferior to the rest ; but there is not one of them that would not appear to more advantage in an English dress. The Scottish dialect comes gracefully from the lips of Burns, because it was his own, and because he wrote for the peasantry of Scotland ; but it loses all its beauty, when it ceases to be natural, and is then entitled to no higher praise than that which is due to an easy imitation. We never witness a disposition to copy the manner or peculiarities, to which circumstances have given popularity, without regret ; it is so rarely witnessed

in Miss Gould, that we allude to it now, rather in reference to others than to her ; excepting in the single particular which we have mentioned, it is one from which she is wholly free ; but it is quite too common, and involves an error of the same sort, as an imitation of the gait or dress ; for the very peculiarities, so assiduously imitated, are invariably the least attractive characteristics, and not unfrequently the most serious defects of the model.

The following lines, on the subject of "The Lily," present an interesting specimen of the style and sentiment of the author.

"Imperial beauty ! fair, unrivalled one !
What flower of earth has honor high as thine, —
To find its name on his unsullied lips,
Whose eye was light from heaven ?
In vain the power
Of human voice to swell the strain of praise
Thou hast received ; and which will ever sound
Long as the page of inspiration shines,
While mortal songs shall die as summer winds
That, wafting off thine odors, sink to sleep !
I will not praise thee, then ; but thou shalt be
My hallowed flower ! The sweetest, purest thoughts
Shall cluster round thee, as thy snowy bells
On the green, polished stalk, that puts them forth !
I will consider thee, and melt my cares
In the bland accents of His soothing voice,
Who, from the hill of Palestine, looked round
For a fair specimen of skill divine ;
And, pointing out the Lily of the field,
Declared the wisest of all Israel's kings,
In his full glory, not arrayed like thee !"

There is an air of originality in the following lines. Their title, "The Consignment," is not, perhaps, sufficiently descriptive of their character.

"Fire, my hand is on the key,
And the cabinet must ope !
I shall now consign to thee
Things of grief, of joy, of hope.
Treasured secrets of the heart
To thy care I hence entrust ;
Not a word must thou impart,
But reduce them all to dust.

This, — in childhood's rosy morn,
This was gaily filled and sent.
Childhood is forever gone ;
Here, — devouring element.
This was friendship's cherished pledge ;
Friendship took a colder form ;
Creeping on its gilded edge,
May the blaze be bright and warm.

These, — the letter and the token,
Never more shall meet my view !
When the faith has once been broken,
Let the memory perish too !
This, — 'twas penned while purest joy
Warmed the heart and lit the eye ;
Fate that peace did soon destroy,
And its transcript now will I.

This must go ! for, on the seal,
When I broke the solemn yew,
Keener was the pang than steel ;
'Twas a heart-string breaking too !
Here comes up the *blotted leaf*,
Blistered o'er by many a tear.
Hence, thou waking shade of grief,
Go, forever disappear !

This is his, who seemed to be
High as heaven, and fair as light ;
But the visor rose, and he, —
Spare, Oh memory ! spare the sight
Of the face that frowned beneath,
While I take it, hand and name,
And entwine it with a wreath
Of the purifying flame !

These, — the hand is in the grave,
And the soul is in the skies,
Whence they came ! 'Tis pain to save
Cold remains of sundered ties.
Go together, all, and burn,
Once the treasures of my heart !
Still, my breast shall be an urn
To preserve your better part !"

A portion of the contents of this volume is designed for the entertainment and instruction of the young. The pieces to which we allude are full of simple beauty, and are well adapted to produce a pleasing and salutary impression on the mind.

Since its publication, we have seen in various journals poems from the pen of Miss Gould, superior in spirit and elegance to any which it contains. We trust that she will continue to employ her powers in the way which she has thus fortunately selected; for we feel assured that, in proportion as she advances her literary reputation, she will not fail to promote the cause of morality and virtue.

ART. IX. — *Thomas Carlyle.*

Sartor Resartus: in three Books. Reprinted for friends, from Fraser's Magazine. London. 1834.

THIS little work, which, as the title-page informs us, was first published in successive portions in Fraser's Magazine, comes before us under rather suspicious circumstances. It purports to be a sort of commentary, by an anonymous writer, on a late work upon the Philosophy of Dress, or Clothes, by Dr. Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, Professor of the Science of Things in General at the University of Weissnichtwo in Germany. The commentator represents himself as having made the acquaintance of this writer, some years ago, on a visit to the place of his residence; and gives a pretty full description of his personal habits and character, to which we may advert hereafter. Some time after his return, the commentator, or, as he calls himself, the editor, received from his German friend a copy of the work just alluded to, the title of which, at full, is as follows: *Die Kleider, ihr Werden und Wirken*, (Clothes, their origin and influence,) *von Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, J. U. D. &c. Stillschweigen and Co. Weissnichtwo*. The volume was accompanied by a number of the *Weissnichtwo'sche Anzeiger*, containing a notice of it in the following favorable terms. "Here comes a volume of that extensive, close-printed, close-meditated sort, which, be it spoken with pride, is seen only in Germany, perhaps only in Weissnichtwo; issuing from the hitherto irreproachable firm of Stillschweigen and Co. with every external furtherance, it is of such internal quality, as to set neglect at defiance. A work," concludes the well-nigh enthusiastic reviewer, "interesting alike to the antiquary, the historian, and the philosophical thinker; a masterpiece of boldness, lynx-eyed acuteness, and rugged, independent Germanism and philanthropy, (*derben Kerndeutschheit*